

focus on ***Fish & Wildlife***

Get a grip on safe and simple ice fishing

On New Year's Day, I watched a stray beagle rabbit dog struggle to keep from drowning after falling through ice covering Atterbury Fish and Wildlife Area's Pisgah Lake. I couldn't help the flailing, wide-eyed, old dog, and had resigned myself to witnessing the poor creature's last moments when the dog relaxed, threw his front legs flat across the wet ice, planted his toenails and pulled himself back from a watery grave. I thought, "before I go ice fishing, I need to make a set of dognails."

Building a better dognail

Every winter, thousands of Hoosiers enjoy fishing through ice. And every year, several of these hardwater anglers fall through and discover the true meaning of desperation — and sometimes death. Last year, a fisherman drowned in Kosciusko County when he ventured out alone at dusk and fell through ice weakened by Canada geese. If you're unprepared, you've got nothing to hold onto as your heavy boots and coveralls fill with water.

I remember as a kid, I saw old timers wearing a two-piece block of wood around their necks while ice fishing. The blocks snapped apart to reveal two heavy-duty ice picks. Essentially, you had two big emergency dog toenails to jam into the ice if needed.

As I rummaged through my mind and garage for stuff to make into a set of matching ice awls, I called Dean Shadley, a conservation officer and ice fisherman from Rushville, to ask about ice fishing safety. While I pawed through nails, bolts and wood scraps, Shadley told me conservation officers see drownings every winter resulting from anglers, ice skaters or playing kids falling through ice.

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Steve Andrews of Bedford, Ind. catches perch at Lake James. With a little common sense, ice fishing can be safe and productive.

Topics this issue...

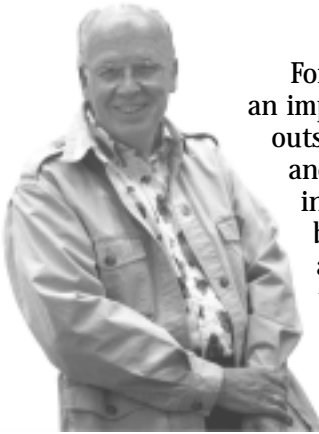
Aquatic animals

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Director of *Fish & Wildlife*



For the past few months I have been talking about an important opportunity Congress has to pass an outstanding legislative bill called the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA). Recently it has run into some roadblocks and a national coalition has been launched called the "Great Wildlife Rescue," a campaign to ensure that dedicated funding for wildlife will be passed by the 106th Congress in its final days.

Wildlife funding is one of the hallmarks of the bipartisan Conservation and Reinvestment Act. It would provide the largest infusion of funds for conservation in US history, \$44 billion over the next 15 years. Funds would go mostly to state and local wildlife, parks, coastal and other conservation programs. In some states CARA would almost double federal funding to states for wildlife conservation. CARA passed the House overwhelmingly in May by a 3:1 margin, and was reported out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in July by a 13-7 vote. President Clinton also urged its passage.

My good friend R. Max Peterson, Executive Vice President of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) was instrumental in getting wildlife groups on board as early as 10 years ago in an effort called Teaming with Wildlife. Peterson has said "Wildlife needs help nationwide, not just in the few states that might get grants for one year with no assurance for the next. There is still hope provided the Senate and White House, can in the waning days of Congress, restore the wildlife conservation provisions of CARA. We must make sure state wildlife funding is including in any final legislative package".

Naomi Edelson, IAFWA Teaming with Wildlife Director said "Our coalition has worked way too hard to have wildlife left high and dry. We have used grassroots grit to effect change through democracy. The American people want wildlife funding, and our coalition still believe that the will of the people will prevail."

The coalition assisted in acquiring signatures of 63 Senators on a letter to the Senate leadership urging the scheduling of CARA for a Senate floor vote before the close of the 106th Congress. As many as 300 organizations from each state wrote similar letters to their Senators. Edelson stated, "Wildlife, the most popular and least controversial part of the bill, deserves better! We won't accept a hollow substitute for our coalition's efforts."

Gary Doxtater

Mission

To manage fish and
wildlife for present
and future
generations,

balancing ecological, recreational and
economic benefits.



Focus on Fish & Wildlife is a quarterly publication from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife. *Focus on Fish & Wildlife* seeks to educate sportsmen and women, conservationists, wildlife recreationists and all Hoosiers on topics related to the management of Indiana's fish and wildlife resources.

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Get a grip on ice fishing...

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"Warn your kids about playing on frozen lakes and streams without supervision," stressed Shadley. "And if you're fishing, drill your own test hole near shore. Don't trust anyone else's measurements. Ice strength can change fast. Thick ice is rotten after a rain. Old honey-combed ice or ice with current under it is also dangerous. Your test hole should show at least a four-inch thickness of nice, clear ice like you get from your refrigerator."

Shadley said outdoor writer Bayou Bill Scifres told him how to make a safety anchor using a nearby ice fishing hole. "You tie one end of the rope to the middle of a short board and slip the board through the extra hole and pull it up tight against the bottom of the ice—like a toggle bolt. Keep the other end of the rope within reach."

Shadley also wears his personal flotation device (PFD) over his coveralls. If he's fishing a small farm pond alone, he'll tie himself to shore.

Other safety maneuvers include pushing a small boat in front of you on unfamiliar ice, or keeping a boat, strong rope or extension ladder nearby that can be fetched by fellow anglers.

Shadley also explained why Indiana law limits ice fishing holes to a diameter of twelve inches. "I saw an idiot chop a five by seven foot fishing hole in the ice at Brookville Lake. If a little skim ice and a little snow covers his hole, he's created a death trap for the next angler."

A similar trap can be created by flocks of waterfowl or beavers, who work to keep small areas of water ice free. Tri-Lakes Fish and

Wildlife Area property manager Steve Roth believes geese maintaining a patch of open water may have contributed to the ice-fishing related drowning in his county last winter. He said a flock of geese were seen swimming for several days in the same spot where the fisherman fell through the ice.

Roth reminds anglers using shanties to put red reflectors on each side so snowmobiles won't crash into them. Ice fishing shanties are small windbreaks or shacks sledded onto the ice for shelter. The walls block light from an angler's lantern as well as wind, and make them hard to see at night and in falling snow.

Roth agreed that four inches of solid ice is needed for safe fishing, and that ice quality varies. "If in doubt, don't go out," advised Roth. "Live to fish another day."

Prepared by John Maxwell, program director



Dog Nails: Simple safety devices can help you survive a fall through weak ice. These two ice picks fit together and are worn around the neck when ice fishing. They can be used to grip wet ice. Make sure the rope is as long as your outstretched arms.

Spikes, bee moths, mousies and wigglers

You don't need a lot of fancy equipment to get started ice fishing. A simple ice fishing rod costs less than \$10, and an inexpensive plastic reel costs less than \$2. Or you can use a regular ultralight reel with a drag. These reels start at \$20.

Many anglers use tiny lures that sell for around \$1 each. And most people bait these lures with small live insect larvae with neat names like spikes, bee moths, mousies and wigglers. These larvae, along with minnows, can be purchased at bait shops. A plain hook and a minnow are hard to beat for crappie, but don't let your minnow bucket water freeze solid.

Choice of fishing line varies, but most use 2-pound test monofilament. Some ice fishermen use a bobber to detect a bite, while others use special spring bobbers that wiggle just off the rod tip. Other anglers use no bobbers at all, relying on feel and concentration to let them know when a fish is biting.

Finally, you need to cut a hole in the ice. Veteran ice fishers recommend an ice auger. Sharpened blades on the auger cut through the ice like an old hand-cranked wood drill. Motorized versions work better on thick ice.

Get a lake map and start drilling over structure near shore, then move deeper. Or look to see where others are catching fish. A portable fish finder helps. A small ladle-like skimmer is used to clear new ice out of your hole.

Don't forget warm clothes and good insulated waterproof boots. Throw all your stuff and a thermos of hot beverage in a five gallon pickle bucket and go.

focus on

Turkey hunting - you're never too old

Turkey fever can strike at any age

I don't know why I waited so many years to go turkey hunting, but opening day of turkey season was finally here.

I hiked to the top of Big Tom Knob with my good friend Tucker. It was a long hike, with all the gear I had to carry—mostly Tucker's—which included a folding chair.

Exhausted and out of breath, we made it to the top, and constructed a small camo fort (not out of the whole 300 yards of material I had just carried up the hill) and hid inside.

After getting settled in, Tucker turned and looked at me with a serious gaze that seemed to say "It's time." He began with a box call followed up with a squeak box. Right away he coaxed in a hen that had one bad leg. Tucker tried again. This time in came a dog that had seen better days. I began to wonder what kind of training my buddy had calling in turkeys.

The initial rush of adrenaline was wearing off. Tucker played the box call again. We waited. "Did you hear that long beard gobble?" said Tucker. I rolled my eyes and thought, "Yeah, right." Two minutes later he said, "Sam, did you hear it that time?" I still couldn't hear a thing, except for pileated and red-bellied woodpeckers who were angry that we were homesteading in their territory. I thought to myself, "What's this turkey hunt coming to?" A sane person might have given up, but I had turkey fever.

And then, I actually heard the turkey gobble. I began looking off into the woods, hoping I could spot him as he strutted in. Sure enough, there he was. My first thought was "I wish I had a video camera so I could film this." My pulse raced. Tucker calmed me with encouraging words like "Now Sam, don't mess this up. It's time for my breakfast."

I laughed quietly to myself at his

comments, but remained steadfast. I was like a bird dog on point. I drew a bead on the strutting Tom as it began making small 'S' turns among the may apples that were in bloom. I watched the turkey draw ever closer and good old Tucker kept up his encouragement by listing all the things he was going to have for breakfast—eggs, ham, toast... "Shhh" I quietly scolded him out of the side of my mouth.

I was thinking this bird is never going to come out of strut. It continued to strut, full fan and wings dragging. I took careful aim and fired. Tucker looked at me in amazement. I had just taken my first wild turkey.

Then, like someone giving us a cue, we gave each other high fives and began verbally reconstructing the whole thing. Tucker paused and said, "Sam, go tag the bird."

The bird? The tag? My thought process turned to "Boy, that's some expensive meat, maybe \$100 a pound." Still, I was very proud to have taken such a nice bird and done so safely. My thoughts then went to wishing that all my hunting buddies could have been there with me.

Back at camp there was plenty of praise, hand shaking, and dozens of pictures. I felt as if I just

won the Indianapolis 500.

Around the campfire that evening we talked about how I was going to mount the fan and beard, and prepare the meat. Before we turned in for the evening, I gave in to pleas to tell the story just one more time.

Now I look forward to turkey camp. To be outside, along the Blue River, listening for the call of the wild turkey, is truly one of my favorite things—not only for me, but for the "youngster" that still lives within me.

Prepared by Sam Purvis, boating law administrator, Division of Law Enforcement



Sam Purvis, with all the proof he needs in hand.

focus on

Aquatic animals - our heritage runs deep

Indiana's water ecosystem supports a diversity of animals

Indiana has a rich aquatic heritage, with several large river systems, the Lake Michigan shoreline and approximately 450 natural lakes. These water ecosystems support a diversity of animals, many of which fall into the nongame or endangered category.

The DNR is charged with protecting and managing more than 550 wildlife species in the state. This number includes aquatic species such as fish, amphibians and freshwater mussels.

Summer and early fall are busy months for DNR's aquatic biologist, Brant Fisher. His field projects cover the state and focus on such creatures as lake sturgeon, freshwater mussels and darters, Indiana's smallest fish. The data gathered from these surveys provides information for developing effective management strategies. These projects also provide information for reviewing a species' status in the state. For example, as a result of the darter survey, one or two of these fish may be removed from the state's endangered list.



Brant Fisher holds an endangered lake sturgeon. In the Great lakes, sturgeon can exceed eight feet in length and weigh up to 300 pounds.

Darters

Seven species of darter - bluebreast, spotted, Tippecanoe, harlequin, gilt, spottail, and variegate - are listed as endangered in Indiana. A three year survey, initiated in 1998, is attempting to accurately define the current range of each of these endangered fish. Some of the major finds include: Tippecanoe darters from the Wabash River and spotted darters in the East Fork White River. Both of these species have never been collected in these drainages, showing an important change in distribution.

Mussels

The status of freshwater mussels continues to be a concern in Indiana, especially with the growing number of zebra mussels. Although most of Indiana's freshwater mussel species are found in rivers, several are adapted for life in natural lake habitats. The distribution of freshwater mussels in northern Indiana' is unknown, so a survey of these habitats began in 1998. More than 100 lakes have been sampled and populations of two rare mussels (wavyrayed lampmussel and rayed bean) have been found. Most lakes sampled have evidence of mussel presence.

Lake sturgeon

A survey to record populations of the endangered lake sturgeon is another on-going project. Last year, 68 different lake sturgeon had



Seventy-seven species of freshwater mussels once inhabited the state's waterways. Ten of those species are now extinct, 15 are endangered and populations of another nine species have been greatly diminished.

been captured and released, ranging in size from three to 97 pounds and two to 6.5 feet in length. During the first two years of the study, all lake sturgeon were captured from the same location. Recently, lake sturgeon have been captured at four new locations. Several smaller lake sturgeon were collected, including one individual weighing 2.8 pounds. Finding smaller individuals is a sign that reproduction is occurring. In the future, the focus shifts to finding spawning areas in Indiana.

These surveys are funded by donations to the Endangered Wildlife Fund through the Indiana state income tax checkoff. Donations for on-going aquatic research can be sent to: Endangered Wildlife Fund, Division of Fish and Wildlife, 402 West Washington Street, Room W273, Indianapolis, IN 46204. For more information about Indiana's Endangered Wildlife Program, contact Kathy Quimbach at (317) 232-4080. Information on the Endangered Wildlife Program is also available on the web at www.dnr.state.in.us/fishwild/index.htm.

Prepared by Kathy Quimbach, nongame biologist

focus on *Private lands management*

Positive strides are being made in improving Hoosier wildlife habitat

The DNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife strives to professionally manage Indiana's fish and wildlife populations for present and future generations, while balancing ecological, recreational, and economic benefits for all Hoosiers.

Hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing are dependent on the quantity and quality of fish and wildlife habitats and the wildlife they produce.

Indiana's privately owned lands provide the bulk of wildlife recreation opportunities. Ninety-two percent of Indiana's hunters hunt on private land. In addition, approximately 1.3 million Hoosiers participate in wildlife viewing on non-public lands in Indiana.

With 97 percent of Indiana's landscape in private ownership, natural resource managers firmly believe that the future of wildlife management and wildlife recreation in Indiana is largely dependent on the creation, restoration, and management of wildlife habitats and wildlife populations on private land.

The DNR is redirecting more of its technical resources toward private lands wildlife habitat development by increasing the number of personnel responsible for private land management.

Sixteen private lands management biologists will be responsible for a five to six-county district. In addition, property management staff on six fish and wildlife areas will assume private lands management responsibilities in the county associated with their property. Biologists are working closely with a growing constituency of private landowners to promote stewardship for Indiana's wildlife resources to provide a greater level of wildlife-related, recreational opportunities on private lands.

The private lands initiative will provide expertise to meet the

demands for wildlife related services. Biologists will actively work with landowners to develop detailed wildlife management plans and provide financial incentive packages to assist in habitat development projects.

Opportunities for improving wildlife habitat abound. One such opportunity is the 1996 Federal Farm Bill. Through its many agriculturally based programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), thousands of acres of wildlife habitat can be developed, restored, or enhanced while providing important

soil erosion control and water quality benefits.

One priority will be to assist U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) personnel in preparing conservation plans to maximize wildlife benefits on these acres.

Another priority will be to contact owners of existing CRP lands and offer them opportunities to revitalize the wildlife benefits associated with their CRP acreage. More than 81,000 acres of grasses and legumes have been entered into CRP over the years. Many of these areas lose their vegetative diversity and become too thick for optimum wildlife usage.

Using various methods, we can restore the vegetative diversity and wildlife benefits to these lands and



More than 19,000 acres of agricultural lands were recently accepted in the Conservation Reserve Program. Our biologists will be to assist U.S. Department of Agriculture personnel in preparing conservation plans to maximize wildlife benefits.

on private lands

improve them for rabbits, quail, and pheasants, as well as grassland songbirds. In addition, new incentives to set aside land in riparian corridors and filter strips have also opened the doors to restore miles of wildlife habitat along our rivers and streams. Taking advantage of these opportunities can only be accomplished by providing increased technical resources and manpower at the local level.

As Indiana's population has grown, the number of rural landowners owning 20 to 40 acres has increased. Most new landowners place a high value on wildlife and are very interested in providing and caring for the wildlife resources that occur on their land.



One of the top priorities of the private lands management is to maximize wildlife benefits on these lands.



Biologists will be working with private land owners to develop wildlife management plans and to provide financial incentive packages to defray habitat development costs.

With increases in habitat and land ownership fragmentation, the Division is also working at the landscape and watershed levels. Biologists will participate more actively with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), local units of government, and other state agencies and organizations to tackle natural resource concerns with a holistic approach.

A new era of public involvement in wildlife management has arisen in the form of specialized conservation organizations. Organizations such as, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, and The National Wild Turkey Federation have contributed significantly to the development of wildlife habitat on Indiana's rural landscape over the last decade. The Division recognizes the excellent work these organizations have accomplished.

Biologists are able to work more closely with these and other "grass roots" organizations to provide them the technical expertise, information, and support they need to continue their excellent work.

The Division is dedicated to

improving Indiana's wildlife habitat, promoting wildlife management, and increasing wildlife-associated recreational opportunities and experiences that Hoosiers truly value.

In the near future, private lands biologists will also be hosting wildlife management field days, where landowners can learn various techniques for developing and managing their wildlife and wildlife habitats.

Prepared by Gary Langell, private lands program coordinator

In the most recent CRP sign-up, more than 19,000 acres of agricultural lands were accepted into the program. Of this acreage:

- 3,348 acres will be dedicated to grass-legume mixtures.
- 6,927 acres will be planted to prairie grasses.
- 1,341 acres of wetlands will be restored.
- 2,559 acres of permanent wildlife habitat will be created.

focus on *Sauger reintroduction*

Biologists orchestrate East Fork of the White River sauger revival

Sauger are one of Indiana's tastiest and most abundant native game fish. Southern Indiana river anglers usually catch these camouflaged members of the perch family as they congregate below dams on winter spawning runs. Sauger are native to the East Fork of the White River, but for some unknown reason, they disappeared at some point from the 110-mile stretch of river above Williams Dam, near Bedford, Ind.

The East Fork of the White River begins at Columbus, Ind., and flows approximately 190 miles south and west through Indiana. It joins the West Fork of the White River to form the White River near Petersburg in Pike County. During fish surveys in the early '90s, sauger were found below Williams Dam, but no sauger were found upstream of the dam.

DNR biologists decided to reintroduce sauger to the upper stretch of the river because they are sought-after sport fish, the habitat was appropriate, and because sauger serve as host for larvae of several native mussel species.

The area for the reintroduction was the upper 24-mile stretch of river between the lowhead dam at Columbus and the lowhead dam at Rockford on the north side of Seymour.

In order to maintain genetic integrity, sauger broodstock were collected from below Williams Dam. Cikana State Fish Hatchery developed techniques to spawn the fish, hatch the eggs and rear the fingerlings. The first sauger fingerlings were released into the river below the Columbus Dam in June 1995. Approximately 150,000 fingerlings have been stocked into the study area since 1995.

Electrofishing surveys in 1998 between Columbus and Seymour found three fish from the 1996 stocking. The number of sauger

collected in 1999 increased seven fold, and included sauger stocked in 1996, 1998 and 1999. The largest sauger collected last year were 18-inches long.

An angler fishing for smallmouth bass below the Columbus dam in 1998 was the first to report catching a sauger. Others have reported catching sauger immediately below the dam at Rockford as well as three miles below Rockford near State Road 258. Sauger up to 19.5 inches long have been caught by anglers below the Columbus and Seymour dams.

Sauger have also moved around the dam at Columbus. Anglers reported catching sauger in the Driftwood River a few miles above the dam. One sauger swam upstream through the Driftwood River into Sugar Creek and

was caught east of Franklin, about 40 river miles upstream of Columbus.

All sauger for this reintroduction effort have now been stocked. Fingerling survival appears to be good and the sauger population should sustain itself.

Electrofishing surveys for young-of-the-year sauger will continue in 2001 and 2002. Young fish indicate natural reproduction and a successful reintroduction project.

For more information about Indiana's fisheries programs, call (317) 232-4080. Information about the Division of Fish and Wildlife is available on the web at www.dnr.state.in.us/fishwild/index.htm.

Prepared by Larry L. Lehman, fisheries biologist



Fisheries biologist Brian Schoenung displays a sauger caught below Williams Dam in the in the East Fork of the White River. The DNR has been reintroducing sauger above the Williams Dam since 1995.

focus on

Monitoring Indiana's amphibians

Frogs, toads and salamanders, oh my!



Frogs, toads and salamanders may be declining in numbers. Don't let them "croak." Help study Indiana's amphibians by collecting data that can be used for future management decisions.

Almost everyone has a frog story. Mention frogs and most people conjure up memories of summer evenings filled with frog song, chasing after a frog in the backyard or playing leapfrog with friends. Invariably, after the storytelling, the comment is made that frogs and toads appear to be scarce today. Ponds that resounded in frog and toad choruses, now seem more silent.

Growing concerns

There has been a growing concern over the past few years that amphibians—frogs, toads and salamanders—are declining throughout the United States. Research showing yearly trends in amphibian populations is lacking. In response, the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program was created to involve states in monitoring amphibian populations.

The program's purpose is to provide a protocol for consistent monitoring methodology and to establish reliable baseline information about amphibian distribution and abundance.

Amphibian monitoring program

Indiana joined the monitoring program in 1999 with a pilot project run by the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The program went statewide in 2000 when coordination of the program was passed to the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife. This project relies on volunteers to study Indiana's amphibian populations and to collect data that can be used for future management decisions.

Indiana's first full year of monitoring focused on conducting frog and toad calling surveys along 56 random routes. Three training

workshops were conducted; one each in the north, central and southern portions of the state. Once trained, volunteers chose a route and conducted several surveys over the course of frog/toad breeding seasons. The workshops resulted in 242 trained volunteers and 43 of the 56 random routes assigned and surveyed in 2000. One goal for spring 2001 is 100 percent coverage of the random routes.

Workshops for volunteers

Methods for implementing the surveys expand in 2001 with the addition of atlas routes (routes chosen by the volunteers) and a backyard calling survey. These additions create a need for more survey volunteers. Training workshops begin in December for northern Indiana and will continue throughout January. Anyone interested in volunteering **MUST** attend a workshop. The workshop schedule will be posted on the Division of Fish and Wildlife's webpage at www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/index.htm. No registration is required.

Indiana's amphibian monitoring program offers an opportunity for direct involvement with one of the state's fascinating wildlife creatures. The work done by these amphibian volunteers goes a long way toward guaranteeing frog songs and stories for generations to come.

This program is funded by donations to the Endangered Wildlife Program, Indiana's income tax checkoff. For more information about Indiana's amphibian monitoring program, contact Kathy Quimbach at (317) 232-4080.

Prepared by Kathy Quimbach, nongame biologist

focus on *Accessible hunting*

With a little help from your friends is all it takes

"A little higher, more to the left, hold still!" Those were the orders that Dru Hunsinger whispered to Dr. Brad Thurston who was assisting Dru in aiming his muzzleloader at a doe standing 25 yards away. On the other end of the muzzleloader I was supporting the stock against Dru's shoulder and moving his head from side to side in an attempt to help him establish proper sight alignment.

Suddenly, Brad and I were startled by the report of the gunshot. It had clearly taken us by surprise. We smiled at each other as we realized that Dru had gotten his deer. Being an experienced hunter, Dru knew that it would be of little use to pull the trigger unless everything was properly aligned—even if it does take a while.

Dru had proven that a hunter suffering from multiple sclerosis, along with a little help from friends, could successfully hunt deer.

Hunting tactics have to be altered a bit, but the end result will be the same. It was hard to distinguish who was more thrilled with his accomplishment, Brad, Dru or me.

All of this action took place during the last half-hour of a handicapped hunt hosted by Dr. Brad Thurston and his wife Susan. The hunt was sponsored by the Central Indiana Chapter of Safari Club International.

Five handicapped hunters participated in the special hunt. Dru Hunsinger, Charlie Pope, Russ Shafer, Dan Heath and Cameron Brown, traveled several miles that day to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

The hunt was restricted to hunters who are handicapped to such a degree that the only way they are capable of hunting is from a wheelchair, golf cart or other motor driven vehicle.

I asked some of the hunters about the difficulty of being a handicapped hunter, their answers surprised me. Russ Shafer, explained how difficult it is to get some people to relax around

handicapped hunters. He said "Sometimes it takes a great deal of coaxing to get other non-handicapped hunters to relax and enjoy themselves." I had always assumed that it would be the other way around.

Russ practiced what he preached. In no time everybody was gathered around his wheelchair, joking, poking fun at one another and finalizing plans for the hunt.

Only one of these five hunters had been handicapped since birth. The other four had become disabled after they had reached adulthood. None of them objected to sharing with us the cause of their disability. Two had been stricken with multiple sclerosis at mid-life and two were injured in accidents while in their twenties.

The cards dealt these hunters would dampen the spirits of most men, but not these hunters. They carried a special attitude. We had gathered to assist five dedicated sportsmen. It took every second of light that we could squeeze out of the day, but I am happy to report that all five hunters succeeded.

Prepared by Dean Shadley

Disabilities hunting permit

The Division of Fish and Wildlife issues hunting permits to individuals who have disabilities that prevent them from taking wildlife under regular hunting regulations.

To apply, you must complete a person with disabilities hunting application form, and your physician must complete a statement of disability form.

For more information, or to obtain a disabilities hunting application: contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife, 402 West Washington Street, W273 Indianapolis, IN 46204 or call (317) 232-4080.

The DNR encourages hunters with disabilities to look at hunting opportunities on state fish and wildlife, reservoir, or forest properties.

Hunters with a disabilities hunting permit can contact DNR properties for information on available hunting opportunities.



Charlie Pope knows that patience is the key to successful deer hunting.

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Hunters *helping* the hungry

Fight hunger right here at home by donating venison to food banks throughout the state. High protein, low fat foods such as venison are always needed by organizations that provide food to the low income, working families of Indiana.

Sportsmen Against Hunger is meeting that need by organizing distribution of venison to the areas where it's needed most. Eleven Indiana meat processors have offered their facilities as processing and collection points.

To ensure the highest health standards, all venison donated through the program must be commercially ground and wrapped in two to four pound packages. Donors are asked to cover the cost of processing.

Hoosier deer hunters put approximately six million pounds of venison on the table each year. By donating all or a portion of your deer harvest, either this years or next, you will help fight hunger and show Hoosiers that hunters care.

The Safari Club International

***Sportsmen Against Hunger is organized
 by the Central Indiana Chapter of Safari
 Club International. For more information
 or to become a participating meat
 processor call (317) 335-6860.***



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